

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LONDON 05397 020729Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NSC-05 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03
ACDA-10 NSAE-00 PA-02 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-15
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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2237
SECDEF WASHDC
INFO USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS
USNMR SHAPE
USCINCEUR
CINCUSNAVEUR
CINCUSAFE
USDOCOSOUTH
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

UNCLAS LONDON 05397

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: UK. AWACS, MILI
SUBJECT: NATO AEW: PRESS REACTION TO UK NIMROD DECISION

REF: LONDON 5372
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1. THE QUALITY PRESS GIVES FRONT PAGE PROMINENCE TO THE
ANNOUNCEMENT IN COMMONS YESTERDAY BY MULLEY OF THE UK
GO-AHEAD FOR NIMROD (REFTEL). THE TIMES HEADLINES IT AS
"NATO UPSET BY CHOICE OF NIMROD"; AND THE FINANCIAL
TIMES AS "NIMROD GO-AHEAD A POPULAR VERDICT". THE DAILY
TELEGRAPH AND THE GUARDIAN ALSO GIVE THE SUBJECT FULL

PLAY.

2. THE REPORTING IS STRAIGHTFORWARD, EMPHASIZING TECHNOLOGICAL AND EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS FOR UK AND FACT THAT BRITISH WILL PUSH TO MAKE NIMROD INTEROPERABLE WITH NATO AEW/AWACS. MOST OF THE REPORTING PICKS UP THE POINT MULLEY MADE AT A PRESS CONFERENCE THAT HE HIMSELF PREFERRED A COLLECTIVE NATO DECISION CENTERED ON AWACS.

3. THE OVERALL REACTION IS TO WELCOME THE NIMROD DECISION. FOR EXAMPLE, DONALDSON (THE AIR CORRESPONDENT FOR THE DAILY TELEGRAPH) WRITES THAT "A BIG SIGH OF RELIEF IS THE RAF'S REACTION TO THE ANNOUNCEMENT..." THE GUARDIAN QUOTES WINSTON CHURCHILL (A CONSERVATIVE

DEFENSE SPOKESMAN) AS SAYING THAT NIMROD IS "... A SUPERB PIECE OF BRITISH TECHNOLOGY..." BUT ALSO NOTES THAT MULLEY CONSIDERED NIMROD UNTIL JUST RECENTLY "... A FALL BACK OPTION." MULLEY ALSO ADMITTED THAT ACHIEVING COMPATIBILITY AND INTEROPERABILITY BETWEEN AWACS AND NIMROD "WOULD BE A PROBLEM" BUT HE PROMISED BRITISH WILL PUSH FOR "MAXIMUM INTEROPERABILITY AND COMPATIBILITY."

4. THE PRESS PLACES BLAME FOR THE FAILURE OF NATO TO AGREE, EXCEPT IN PRINCIPLE, ON AWACS AT GERMANY'S DOORSTEP AND MOST OF THE REPORTING ASSERTS THE SMALLER NATO NATIONS HAD LITTLE ENTHUSIASM FOR THE COST OF AWACS.

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Message Attributes

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